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- September - Issue 1 - 2008



U.S. Embassy Oslo - Public Affairs Newsletter

Live! Learn!

Dear Readers,

Our first newsletter was published just over a year ago, and was intended to be a quarterly publication. Unfortunately, staff shortages prevented us from issuing subsequent issues as planned. Now, after a period of turnovers, we're happy to announce that the U.S. Embassy's public affairs section is once again a robust, fully-staffed unit, working hard to produce this quarterly newsletter and to promote Norwegian-American relations in many other ways! Our tight-knit section is staffed by two U.S. diplomats and seven Norwegian local employees, and the work we do is referred to as "public diplomacy". Our audience includes educational institutions, think tanks, the media, the research community, political parties, NGOs, and the many thousands of people in Norway who in one way or another make a

difference to the Norwegian American relationship.

"The proof of the pudding is in the eating" as the saying goes, and we feel that the most effective way to foster understanding and appreciation of the U.S. is to let its people and institutions speak for themselves. As Senator Fulbright put it when he established the famous Fulbright scholarship program, "Educational exchange can turn nations into people, contributing as no other form of communication can to the humanizing of international relations." With this quarterly newsletter, we hope not only to keep you informed about various events and programs that might be of interest to you, but also engage your active participation in the mutual business of public diplomacy!



The Public Affairs Office with Public Affairs Officer Hilary Olsin-Windecker in front.

Updates: Strengthening people-to-people ties through Educational Exchange

The exchange of students is of vital importance to the U.S. and Norway. The combination of academic experience and personal growth will create an unforgettable period in students' lives and help them forge lifelong ties.

However, the number of Norwegian students earning a full university degree in the U.S. has decreased drastically and is now one third of what it was 15 years ago. The U.S. Embassy is working hard to try and reverse this trend. We have met with representatives from the Norwegian and the U.S. educational systems to discuss how to make the application process to the U.S. easier. We have initiated bilateral agreements

such as the Maritime Exchange Program and launched a Mentor- and Speaker Bureau Program, which also harnesses the knowledge of Norwegian alumni by sharing their experiences with students. We continue to support and promote high school exchange programs and our flagship Fulbright program.

The visible increase in Norwegian high school students going to the U.S. this year and the growing number of Fulbright scholarship applicants has been encouraging.

Educational exchange is an ongoing process, and any contribution you as an



In 2007 the Embassy launched a web portal to help students in the jungle of information: www.usastudier.no

individual or a member of an organization may have to our efforts will expand our reach and success of the program.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with suggestions or ideas:

21308996 / osloIRC@state.gov



The Outstanding Students from the left: Jon, Monika, Marie-Astrid, Karen and Waqar

Norwegian students on Summer Exchange in the U.S.

Each summer, the U.S. Embassy, in cooperation with the Norwegian Fulbright Foundation, sends a handful of bright Norwegian students to the U.S. to participate in prestigious exchange programs. This year was no exception.

Live! Learn!



The Fulbright Summer Institute for Outstanding European Students

This year, five outstanding Norwegian undergraduate students were chosen as the 2008 Norwegian representatives: Jon Gudbrand Fliflet, Oslo, Karen Grønseth Hübner, Oslo, Waqar Aslam Malik, Oslo, Marie-Astrid Elisabeth Matlary, Oslo and Monika Sagar, Drammen. The Institute focuses on study of the U.S. and leadership concepts. This year's fellows spent 5 weeks at either Drexel University in Philadelphia (PA) or Bentley College in Boston (MA), where communication skills, presentation skills, and the ability to establish intercultural dialogue challenged new ways of thinking. The Embassy is impressed by the young future leaders, and we have no doubt that they will become the community leaders the program aspires to make of them.

The Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Initiative

Kenneth Sydhagen (18) from Lørenskog wrote the winning essay and was selected for the annual Ben Franklin Summer Institute. The Initiative brings together youth from Eurasia, Europe and America, allowing them to discover shared values across various ethnic, religious, and national groups. Participants this year

discussed topics such as 'Citizens and Conflict in Regions and Nations', the Media environment, and Social Movements. In addition to their 2 weeks at Wake Forest University in North Carolina, they traveled to Philadelphia, Washington D.C. and Williamsburg to visit various institutions and organizations.

While in the U.S., Kenneth said that "I see this program as the beginning of something new, something bigger and even more important", and we look forward to following him in the future.



2008 Ben Franklin Candidate Kenneth Sydhagen in a discussion with Ambassador Whitney at the annual Independence Day Celebration.

Marit Schou Hauger's life as a Fulbrighter

Marit is a Norwegian Fulbright Fellow 2008, and in the coming editions of the Newsletter, she will share with us her updates from Harvard University.



Marit Schou Hauger

"This year I was admitted to the Master of Public Health program at the Harvard School of Public Health. The financial support from the Fulbright Foundation made it possible for

me to grasp this great opportunity.

Good health is considered a human right. I wanted to learn more about the policies behind health care service and explore the challenge - How can we establish a sustainable health care system which will offer health service to as many people as possible?

For me, Harvard University represents an academic ideal because it, in addition of bringing bright heads together, also promotes idealism, ambitions and a joint enthusiastic belief in the power of knowledge.

The great teaching resources at Harvard attract scholars and professionals from all over the world, and my fellow students will probably be of very different cultural, national and professional backgrounds. I am very much looking forward to studying in this international environment, and I hope to learn a lot both inside and outside of class. I expect my views, my values and not at least my mind to be greatly challenged this year!"

- Marit -

Interested in Student Summer Exchange in the U.S?

Read Kenneth Sydhagen's Ben Franklin Photo Diary

AND/OR

Get in touch with the Fulbright Summer Institute Students through osloIRC@state.gov

Student Video Diary

Follow the Embassy's Student Video Diary Project!

To create an authentic and lively view of the U.S. as part of our youth outreach, we gave video cameras to six Norwegian high school and university students who were chosen based on their proposals and the diversity of their U.S. educational experience.

Follow the Student Video Diary on our Websites

AND

Join the 'USAstudier' Facebook Group where the Video Diaries will be uploaded

Outreach & Events

Live! Learn!



The U.S. Embassy interacts with the Norwegian public in many different ways. Here are some of the events we organized in 2007/2008:

Nobel Peace Prize laureates discuss environmental challenges with students



Ceremony in December 2007.

Nobel Peace Prize Winners 2007, Al Gore and Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, met with 30 handpicked students when they visited the Ambassador at his residence in connection with the Nobel Peace Prize

Moonwalker Dr. Buzz Aldrin brunches with outstanding science students

Dr. Buzz Aldrin, the second man on the moon, visited Oslo in November 2007, and 40 lucky high school and university students got an opportunity to brunch and discuss astronomy and education with him.



High School classes visit Embassy to learn about the U.S. election

Several high school classes have visited the Embassy and participated in interactive sessions about the U.S. elections. Is your school interested in the U.S. elections? Contact us!



Arbor Day

Fifty-two students from three seventh-grade classes celebrated Arbor Day (Plant-a-Tree-Day) on April 25th with Public Affairs and the Ambassador. The students took part in a nature path and planted a Norwegian maple at the Ambassador's residence.



Stanley Sloan Speaker tour

Stanley Sloan, a researcher and NATO expert, spoke with hundreds of Norwegians about the value of NATO and the transatlantic relationship during his Speaker Tour to Norway on February 25 and 26.



Climate Change focus on Ellesmere Expedition Day

Public Affairs worked with the U.S. Will Steger Foundation, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of the Environment to create a hands-on activity day marking the return of the Steger Ellesmere Expedition consisting of US, Norwegian, Canadian and British



explorers. One hundred and twelve 7th and 9th graders came to the backyard of the Ambassador's residence to welcome home polar expedition members Will Steger, Sigrid Ekran, Tobias Thorleifsson and Sam Branson, and learn about polar history, climate change and survival skills.

Gary Nordlinger Speaker tour



From November 19-22 Gary Nordlinger, a political consultant and expert on US election campaigns, visited Norway as a speaker. He held well-attended seminars in Bergen, Trondheim and Oslo on the nuts and bolts of the 2008 presidential election, and contributed to the kick-off of Post's election speaker series.

Norwegian youth tour U.S. battleships

The U.S. Embassy invited youth groups to tour the destroyer USS Barry and the cruiser USS Gettysburg when the ships visited Oslo this spring.



See Embassy Website for more information on the past year's activities:

<http://Norway.usembassy.gov>

Do you want information about Embassy events and opportunities for schools and youth?

Contact the Public Affairs Office at osloIRC@state.gov or call 21308996 between 14.00 og 16.00



U.S. University Alumni Initiative

Live! Learn!

Alumni Speaker Bureau Program launched

In June, the U.S. Embassy kicked off its first Alumni Speaker Bureau event at Oslo Handelsgym. The goal of the program is to have Norwegian alumni of U.S. universities speak to Norwegian high school students about their exchange experiences in the U.S. This event featured an alumnus of the University of Minnesota who gave a colorful and inspiring presentation to 30 very engaged high school students. He focused on the many great memories from his years in the U.S. and stressed the importance of an international background in the Norwegian labor market. The event was a huge success and the students asked many questions.

reconnect with their alma mater, as well as encouraged them to participate in the Embassy's Speaker Bureau and Mentor Program. So far, 100 alumni members have signed up to do outreach to high schools and civic groups and to mentor Norwegian students through the complicated U.S. higher education application process.

University of Minnesota representative awarded Royal Norwegian Order of Merit



In September 2007, Professor Robert B. Kvavik, Associate Vice President at the University of Minnesota (UMN), was awarded the distinguished Royal Norwegian Order of Merit for his efforts to

promote higher educational initiatives between Norway and the U.S.

Kvavik has done an outstanding job in making the UMN accommodating to Norwegian students, with initiatives such as in-state tuition, waiving special UMN insurance and waiving the TOEFL test for Norwegian students.

U.S. Embassy hosts Alumni events



Throughout the 2007/2008 school year the Embassy hosted receptions for Norwegian alumni from 10 U.S. universities as part of Ambassador Whitney's educational exchange campaign. The events helped the alumni members to network and to

Would you like to be part of the Speaker Bureau or Mentor Program?

We always need more "U.S. champions"! If you would like to sign up to become a Speaker or a Mentor, or would like more information- please send an e-mail to osloEDU@state.gov.

* * *

Help the U.S. Embassy identify Alumni groups!

The Embassy continues to be very interested in locating U.S. university alumni groups in Norway. If you know of any alumni groups or have ideas on how the Embassy can reach more former U.S. students in Norway, please contact us on osloEDU@state.gov.

Apply for Scholarship!

Norway-America
Association Scholarship :

- Undergraduate
Students: Dec. 2



See: www.noram.no for info

Become a host family!

Do you want to be a host
family for an American
student visiting Norway?



For more info, go to
AFS and **YFU**

Contact Us

- for ideas and suggestions
- for alumni inquiries
- for school- and youth activities
- to unsubscribe

osloIRC@state.gov / 21308996

See Embassy Website on
Norway.usembassy.gov

See www.USAstudier.no

 usastudier.no